



LOGISTICS

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance

Table of Contents *(scroll or use links below to navigate document)*

Job Overview

Typical Tasks

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

Work Environment

Job Outlook and Wages

Trends

Training

Where Do I Find the Job?

Where Can the Job Lead?

Other Sources



View Career Video

Job Overview

Transportation, whether it involves aircraft, boats, trucks, cars, or bicycles, is vital to the effective delivery of goods. The effective delivery of goods is the essence of logistics, and depends on vehicles of transportation being sent to where they are needed, when they are needed.

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance schedule and send out workers, work crews, equipment, or service vehicles for transport of materials, freight, or passengers, or for normal installation, service, or emergency repairs done away from the place of business. Duties may include using a radio, telephone, or computer to transmit work assignments and compiling statistics and reports on work being done.

No matter where they work, all Dispatchers are assigned a specific territory and are responsible for communications in that area. Many work in teams, particularly Dispatchers in big communications centers or companies. One team member usually handles all dispatching calls to the response units or company drivers, while other members of the team receive incoming calls and have public contact.

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance, can be categorized as Truck Dispatchers, Bus Dispatchers, Train Dispatchers, Taxicab Dispatchers, Tow-truck Dispatchers, and Gas and Water Service Dispatchers.

Truck Dispatchers work for local and long-distance trucking companies and coordinate the movement of trucks between cities. These Dispatchers direct drivers in pickup and delivery, take customers' requests for the pickup and delivery of freight, consolidate freight orders into truckloads for specific destinations, assign drivers and trucks, and draw up routes and schedules.

Bus Dispatchers keep local and intercity buses on schedule. They handle all potential service problems, and they dispatch replacement buses or arrange for repairs to restore service and maintain schedules.

Train Dispatchers make sure that trains are on schedule. They must be aware of track switch positions, track maintenance areas, and the location of other trains running on the track.

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance

Taxicab Dispatchers, or starters, dispatch taxis in response to requests for service and keep logs on all road service calls.

Tow-truck Dispatchers take calls for emergency road service. They describe the nature of the problem to a nearby service station or a tow-truck service and ensure that the road service is completed.

Gas and Water Service Dispatchers monitor gas lines and water mains and send out service trucks and crews to take care of emergencies.

Typical Tasks

- Schedule and dispatch workers, work crews, equipment, or service vehicles to appropriate locations according to customer requests, specifications, or needs, using radios or telephones.
- Arrange for necessary repairs in order to restore service and schedules.
- Relay work orders, messages, and information to or from work crews, supervisors, and field inspectors using telephones or two-way radios.
- Confer with customers or supervising personnel in order to address questions, problems, and requests for service or equipment.
- Prepare daily work and run schedules.
- Receive or prepare work orders.
- Oversee all communications within specifically assigned territories.
- Monitor personnel and/or equipment locations and utilization in order to coordinate service and schedules.
- Record and maintain files and records of customer requests, work or services performed, charges, expenses, inventory, and other dispatch information.
- Determine types or amounts of equipment, vehicles, materials, or personnel required according to work orders or specifications.

*Detailed descriptions of this occupation may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- Active Listening — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Judgment and Decision Making — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- Reading Comprehension — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Speaking — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- Time Management — Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- Critical Thinking — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance

- **Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Transportation** — Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
- **Clerical** — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
- **Public Safety and Security** — Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
- **Information Ordering** — The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
- **Oral Expression** — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

Work Environment

The work can be busy and hectic when many calls come in at the same time. Callers who are anxious or under stress may become excited or impatient and be difficult to deal with or understand; some may even become abusive. Dispatchers must remain calm, objective, and in control of the situation.

Dispatchers sit for long periods, using telephones, computers, and two-way radios. Much of their time is spent at video display terminals, viewing monitors and observing traffic patterns. As a result, Dispatchers can experience eyestrain and back pain. Generally, Dispatchers work a 40-hour week; however, rotating shifts and compressed work schedules are common. Alternative work schedules are necessary to accommodate evening, weekend, and holiday work, as well as 24-hours per day, 7-days per week operations.

Dispatchers, especially those working for trucking firms, may belong to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Dispatchers working for bus companies may belong to the United Transportation Union.

California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2004	Estimated Number of Workers 2014	Average Annual Openings	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance				
43-5032	19,400	21,700	650	\$12.54 to \$21.40

Wages do not reflect self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance

Trends

With a growth rate somewhat below the average rate of growth for all other occupations, job opportunities for those wanting to be Dispatchers will be somewhat limited. More than half of the expected job openings during the 10-year projections period will occur to replace workers who quit, retire, or leave the occupation for other reasons.

Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Many jobs in this occupation are at the entry level, but employers prefer workers who are familiar with computers and other electronic office and business equipment. Typing, filing, recordkeeping, and other clerical skills also are important.

Workers usually develop their skills on the job. This on-the-job training lasts from several days to a few months, depending on the job. While working with an experienced Dispatcher, new employees monitor calls and learn how to operate a variety of communications equipment, including telephones, radios, and various wireless devices. As trainees gain confidence, they begin to handle calls themselves. In smaller operations, Dispatchers sometimes act as customer service representatives by processing orders.

Recommended High School Course Work

Most companies prefer high school graduates. Courses in computer technology and business math can be helpful. Community colleges and vocational schools also give this training.

Where Do I Find the Job?

Direct application to employers is an effective job search method for Dispatchers. Use the *Search for Employers by Industry* feature on the *Career Center* page at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov to locate employers in your area. Search under the following industry names to get a list of private firms and their addresses:

- ➡ Couriers
- ➡ General Freight Trucking, Local
- ➡ Local Messengers and Local Delivery
- ➡ Motor Vehicle Towing
- ➡ Other Specialized Trucking, Local
- ➡ Other Specialized Trucking, Long-Dist
- ➡ Other Support Activities, Road Transport
- ➡ Used Household and Office Goods Moving

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- ➡ Bus Lines
- ➡ Contractors
- ➡ Delivery Service
- ➡ Railroad Companies
- ➡ Towing-Automotive
- ➡ Trucking

The above is not a complete list.

Dispatchers, except Police, Fire, and Ambulance

Where Can the Job Lead?

Dispatchers who work for private firms, which are usually small, will find few opportunities for advancement.

Related Occupations

Licensing Examiners and Inspectors
Counter and Rental Clerks (see *Occupational Guide No. 511*)
Procurement Clerks
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks (see *Occupational Guide No. 70*)
Travel Agents (see *Occupational Guide No. 213*)
Reservation and Transportation Ticket Agents and Travel Clerks
Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers
Subway and Streetcar Operators

Other Sources

International Brotherhood of Teamsters
www.teamster.org

United Transportation Union
www.utu.org

